NEW SERIES *Price 75cts.* VOL. XII No. 4

VERMONT *Quarterly*

The Middlebury-Bristol Ball Game of 1892

A Gathering of Our Neighbors

The Kent Tavern *Lewis Richard Morris*

Romance of an Old Schoolhouse

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October, 1944

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VERMONT

Quarterly

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It is with considerable apologies that this issue comes to our readers so late. The editor was commissioned in the United States Navy in July, and his guest editor for the October issue soon followed him into service. Because the forthcoming official state magazine *Vermont Life* will carry a series of articles on modern Vermont artists, the projected issue on that subject has been canceled. With its facilities for full color reproduction, the former can accomplish the job much better than we could hope to do.

The *Quarterly* for 1945 will appear as a single over-size issue.

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Earle Williams Newton, *Editor*, Montpelier
Printed and made in the United States of America by E. L. Hildreth & Company, Inc.
Publication Office: 8 Harmony Place, Brattleboro, Vermont
$3.00 A Year — Published Quarterly — 75 Cents A Copy
Subscription included in annual membership dues: $2.00

GENERAL OFFICE: MONTPELIER, VT.
Entered as second-class matter December 23, 1937, at the post office at Brattleboro, Vermont, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Vermont Quarterly

1944

NEW SERIES OCTOBER VOL. XII NO. 4

MIDDLEBURY SKETCHES

V. The Middlebury-Bristol Ball Game of 1892

By ROBERT DAVIS

ALL afternoon the menfolks had been carting corn to the ensilage cutter. Sandy was sulky because Luther wouldn't let him knock off, listen to the world's series on the radio.

"We ain't wastin' none o' this dry weather," the farmer insisted, "not f'r ball games that ain't vis'ble. Keep a steppin, Sandy, you 'n Obed, too." The boy was still grumbling, however, even after they had washed and come into the kitchen.

"He won't stay peeved f'r long," said Etta May, dealing plates upon the table. "Not when he sees what's f'r supper." She placed dishes of baked potatoes, cream gravy, cottage cheese, apple pie and cookies. "There's plenty t' fill them hollow legs o' hisn tonight."

Grandma Simms smoothed out her knitting. Over her spectacles, she beamed upon her daughter, her son-in-law, and the two hired men. "Whad-de-y' care f'r these games o' hired perfessionals, Sandy? Men y'ain't never seen 'n don't know fr'm Adam. They don't rightly int'rest me. Not like the home-talent games use to! In yer whole life, Sandy, I don't s'pose you'll ever get t' see a set-to like when we used t' play Add'son Corners 'n Sals'b'ry. You tell him, Luther, about the game when Doc Short was the Middleb'ry man'ger."

The farmer forked out the contents of another potato, spread it with gravy, and passed his empty cup to Etta May. It was the golden hour of his day. The sun was dropping behind the mauve irregularity of the Adirondacks. Evening chores were done. The milk herd had been turned out to browse for the night. Luther extended his stocking feet beneath the table.

"I was a ten-year-old that summer. I musta laughed myself outa two years' growth that one aft'noon. We're laughin yet, ain't we, Gramma? Bristol had a heftier team 'n us folks, but we had Doc Short. He kep' the drug store them days, the one opposite Charlie Rich's.

And he had his dander up t' win that game. Bristol had wan fr'm a coupla towns, 'n we'd beat Sals'b'ry 'n Le'min'ton. This game Gramma tells of 'ud settle who was king pin in Add'son County baseball.

"At that time there wasn't yet the big-salary teams in the cities, 'n the colleges hadn't took up with athaletics, none t' speak of. But ev'ry crossroad settlement worth its salt had a ball club, 'n was ready t' bust their buttons t' back it against their neighbors.

"The game come on the Fourth o' July. And hot! you c'd hear the corn growin. The Bristol fellas drove over in a hayrack, with their famblies 'n friends in buggies 'n democrats strung out behind. All told, homefolks 'n vis't'rs, they musta been two hunderd people on the meetin' house meadow. First off, there want much noise, kind of a hush, like as if blood was goin t' get spilt. Our team kinda expected a lickin, but their teeth was grit hard.

"Them times, the White Ribbon girls was goin' strong. Doc Short was uncommon accomodatin' to 'em. He says they must treat both teams alike, in a genuwine spirit o' sport. He had pervided a banner and a big umberella, 'The W.C.T.U. GREETS OUR HEROES.' Lulu Tucker, who was pres'dent that year, in a white dress, set under the umberella. In front of her was two forty-quart milk cans, wi' cakes o' ice 'n lemonade inside. She was t' fill up the tin cups of the players when they filed past between innin's. The Doc had org'nized it good. He hadn't great shakes of a team, but he had a hive 'o ideas in his head.

"When Lulu 'n the crowd was stretchin their necks t' watch the Bristol rigs arrive, the Doc come fr'm behind, saying nuthin'. He had a twelve-quart milk pail in his hand, 'n emptied the half of it into each of the cans o' lem'nade. Him bein a druggist he c'd get pure alcohol, ev'n durin' temp-runce.

"The Doc warned his team, each one private 'n sep'rit, not t' drink none o' that lem'nade. 'Rinse y'r mouth,' he said, 'ef y' got to, but spew it out,' he said. 'Don't let none of it trickle down y'r throat, y' understand.'

"As I say, the weather was hot, blistering hot. The game started snappy. And did them players sweat. They dripped like ice'cles in a thaw. The Bristol fellas kep up their courage by the sight of the umberella 'n the milk cans 'n ice setting back o' first base. They couldn't barely wait f'r the first innin' t' end. Across they pelted, 'n let the refreshment gurgle down t' where it'd do the most good. At the end o' the second innin' Bristol was seven runs to Middlebury none.

"It wasn't till the fourth innin that the W.C.T.U. lem'nade begun

t' get in its work. Us spectators couldn't figger what ailed the Bristol boys. They'd start t' run 'n kind of veer in a curve. They'd swing at a ball, 'n like 's not the bat'd fly outa their hands inta the air. Their center fielder jumped f'r a high one, fell in a heap, 'n didn't even try t' get up. The pitcher commenced t' cry. He said he'd left home without kissin' his wife goodbye 'n we'd have t' wait ontil he went home 'n did. After the fifth innin' you couldn't truthfully say they was playin' baseball. Ev'ry one of 'em had a grievance 'n wanted t' fight. For one spell only three of the Bristol team was on the di'mond. The shortstop refused t' try f'r anythin below his knees, sayin he'd crack his stummick ef he bent. The first base man set on the bag 'n said he'd sock any person who come within spittin distance. The captin yelled t' the catcher t' hold the calves o' his legs together, 'n stop 'em that way. The catcher yelled back that he did have his calves together, but when the ball come clost up, it got thin like a sheet o' paper, 'n oozed right through.

"Beginnin with the sixt innin, the players hadda ladle out their own refreshment. Lulu Tucker had felt th' heat 'n drunk freely and now had curled herself around the staff of the unberella, sound asleep, with a han'k'chief over her face.

"The game ended up 48 t' 7, favor o' Middlebury. The Bristol man'ger a bat in his hand, was looking high'n-low f'r Doc Short, but he'd gone somewhere else. The most of the Bristol team was fightin amongst theirselves, blamin' each other f'r errors. Three of 'em was so mad they wouldn't ride home in the hayrack, but got driven t' the evenin train outa Middl'bury.

"In the smokin car they sprawled over the seats, terr'ble pess'mistic about playin games. 'Where d' you folks wanta go?' the conductor ast. Holdin out a handful o' change, one o' 'em said, 'Here's y'r money. We want the shortest road to hell.'

" 'I'll take six cents a head,' said the conductor, ' 'n let y' out at New Haven Junction.' "

Luther yawned and held a match to his pipe.

"Now ain't you ashamed o' yerself, Sandy Byrus?" said Gramma Simms, gathering in her loose yarn. "T' make all this how-dy-do because y' couldn't listen on the radio about hired strangers y' don't know 'n won't never see. It ain't as though you wasn't raised right here in Add'son County, where livin men has played ball games as is ball games. Thank y' Luther. It always make me feel younger t' hear about winnin a good game o' ball."

A GATHERING OF OUR NEIGHBORS

An Informal Report on the Annual Meeting of the New York State Historical Association

AS delegate from the Vermont Historical Society to the annual meeting of the New York State Historical Association held in Albany on October 5, 6 and 7, I must acknowledge that I came away with a greatly enlarged vision of what an active historical society can accomplish when furnished with a desire, time and some — money. Perhaps I can best describe the diversified character of the interests of the New York Association by running through the agenda for this, their forty-third annual meeting.

The principal sessions were held in the Ten Eyck Auditorium of the Albany Institute of History and Art — an extremely interesting building, with its splendid arts and crafts exhibits, of which latter I enjoyed especially the display of old Shaker handicrafts. The building was filled with fine paintings, silver, glass and rare things of many kinds. A more suitable setting for the meeting of the Association could hardly be imagined.

Dr. Carl E. Guthe, curator of the State Museum which is located in the Education Building, explained the growth and meaning of the Indian Treaty Belts and extended an invitation to the audience to inspect the very complete display of these belts. One could spend hours there in the Indian section alone.

This was followed by an interesting illustrated talk on the history of the City of Albany by a descendant of one of its old families, Ledyard Cogswell, Jr.

That afternoon there were three subjects under discussion — "New York's Early Engineers," by John Allen Krout, "Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte at West Point," by William D. Hoyt, Jr., and what proved to me to be especially outstanding, a talk by Dr. Harold William Thompson, Professor of English at Cornell University and author of *Body, Boots and Britches*, on "New York Dutch Folklore." He proved himself to be master of his subject, having for many years, first at Union College and later at Cornell, developed a systematic study of New York folklore in his class room. His successor at Union, Prof. Louis C. Jones, has continued in his footsteps, and it was one of the highlights of the entire meeting, later, to meet and talk with a number of the pupils of both of these men and to feel their sustained enthusiasm as they have gone out into their own class rooms, to interest still other young people in the lure of folklore.

As one of the main objectives of my attendance at this meeting was to sit at the feet of folklore specialists and learn from them all I could relating to their methods in collecting and preserving the old time stories, both factual and traditional, I have to admit skipping several very interesting sessions concerning state and local history and arts and crafts — but as some of the sessions were divided into simultaneous gatherings, each taking up a different subject, it was not physically possible for anyone to attend all the meetings, no matter what their interest was.

The Friday afternoon session was given over exclusively to a folklore program, at which Prof. Louis C. Jones spoke on the "Ghosts of New York" — and verily, they walked! Other especially qualified speakers told the stories of John Darling, and of Jerry and the Syracuse Underground Railroad, while a

particularly appealing paper was read by Wheaton P. Webb, on the "Folklore of the Schenevus Valley," — a study which might well be used as a pattern by any small town in Vermont for gathering its traditions and folktales.

Saturday morning a Junior Historians' Program was put on, and exhibits of various kinds developed by the youngsters were placed around the Auditorium for inspection. Simultaneously with this Junior program a gathering of folklorists, under the direction of Drs. Thompson and Jones, seated around a big table in the Board Room of the Art Institute, for the particular purpose of discussing by practical question and answer, the methods of acquiring folklore in the many branches of that inclusive subject. Actual experiences of workers were exchanged and commented upon, and helpful suggestions made relative to carrying on further investigations. This was perhaps, for a beginner, the most worthwhile meeting of the whole series.

On the lighter side of the program one should not fail to mention the five o'clock tea sponsored by the Albany County Historical Association, and presided over by ladies of that organization — a very social affair; or the concert on Thursday evening by John Jacob Niles, who rendered a unique program of American Folk Ballads. He was his own accompanist, on dulcimers which he had constructed himself — each in a different key. The simultaneous luncheons held Friday noon by the County Historians, Old Arts and Crafts, and Folklore groups made for good fellowship and the opportunity to get acquainted with fellow enthusiasts. The social high spot of the meeting was, of course, the very excellent banquet held Friday evening at the DeWitt Clinton Hotel at which Ledyard Cogswell, Jr. acted as toastmaster; Dr. Fox gave an address which was followed by a very forceful and earnest dissertation by Dr. George D. Stoddard, New York's Commissioner of Education, on the general subject of education.

On Saturday afternoon such of the visiting members as desired and could find transportation visited old Fort Crailo, across the Hudson River, and the celebrated Schuyler mansion, the one-time home of Philip Schuyler and later of Alexander Hamilton, in whose hospitable rooms Washington, Lafayette and many other notables were entertained in the long ago. This house is now one of the city's museums and show places.

In addition to the fine things which the program had given us, through the kindness of Mr. Henry H. Eddy, the newly appointed State Archivist of New York, a trip to Cooperstown through the famous Cherry Valley was enjoyed by a group of Association members, to inspect the Farmer's Museum, one of the New York State Historical Association's projects. Here, in a huge stone barn with two extremely large stone silos, once a part of the Cooper family estate, are housed literally thousands of articles used by the farmers of New York, from their very earliest occupancy of the hills and valleys of that state. No more impressive lesson on the life of a farmer in the "good old days" could possibly be learned, than by a few hours spent in this great and constantly growing collection. The Association has recently acquired the beautiful 46-room Cooper mansion across the road from the barn, which will be put into use as central quarters as soon as possible. The possession of such a "plant" must be a tremendous incentive to still better work on the part of the Association.

MARY G. NYE

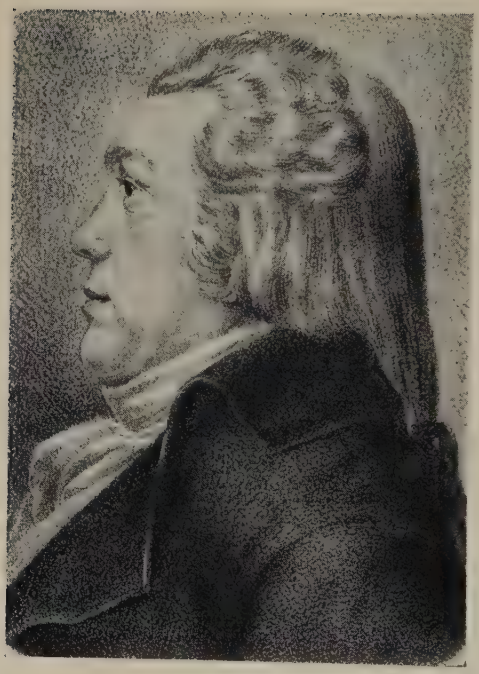
THE KENT TAVERN

THROUGH the generosity of Mr. A. Atwater Kent, the Vermont Historical Society has come into possession of the historic old tavern at Kents Corners, in Calais. This will become the first of a projected number of historic house museums which the Society hopes to establish throughout the state, either under its direct jurisdiction or in cooperation with local historical groups. As soon as possible after the war, and after the completion of repairs and restoration, it will be established as a field museum for the display of household equipment, farm and handicraft implements, and other materials which will recreate the life of the state a century or more ago. With the cooperation of collectors and interested citizens of the state, the Society hopes to make it into an agricultural museum of note, and the center of a restored early American community.

The Vermont Historical Society will be particularly pleased to receive gifts of old agricultural and domestic tools and implements of all varieties and descriptions, for deposit and display at the museum. Size is no longer an impediment, and implements of considerable bulk can now be accepted. A really complete collection will provide visual education in Vermont history of an exceedingly valuable nature.

Located about ten miles north of Montpelier on the old County road, the building stands intact, very nearly as the builders left it 107 years ago. Nearby are a few other houses, including a log cabin and the home of Remember Kent, Revolutionary War veteran and father of Abdiel Kent, builder of the Tavern. Nearby is the fine Old West Church, believed to be the only remaining church with its original square box pews of unpainted pine intact. Above the pulpit are these words: "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set."

The Kent Tavern was erected in 1837 by Abdiel Kent (1805–1887), not far from the site of his birthplace. It was opened on Thanksgiving Day with a ball, at which dancing started at 9 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m. The building is of brick, with timbers cut from the farm, and has four chimneys, several fireplaces, a spacious dining room, and a bar-room. A large wooden addition was used as a general store, for making shoes, harness, and other purposes. With the increase of his family (seen in 1877 in the picture above), Mr. Kent gave up tending tavern, and it soon had become the birthplace of seven children. Although most of them moved away, the place was enlivened summer after summer by homecoming children and grandchildren until 1918, when it was sold. It was later re-purchased by Mr. Atwater Kent, a grandnephew of the original owner and a native of Vermont, who retained great affection for the old homestead. In 1944 Mr. Kent gave not only the Tavern itself, but funds to begin necessary repairs to the foundation. Additional gifts were made by Mr. and Mrs. Ira Rich Kent, to whom the Society owes a debt of gratitude for invaluable assistance given.



General Lewis R. Morris

LEWIS RICHARD MORRIS

A Commissioner for Vermont's Statehood

By Mary W. Ellis

I

Ancestry

CAPTAIN RICHARD MORRIS, son of William Morris of Tintern, Montentshire, England, was a distinguished officer of the Parliamentary Army under Cromwell. At the restoration of Charles II, Captain Morris decided that it was best for him to live outside of England and went to the Barbadoes, disguised as a Quaker, where his brother, Col. Lewis Morris, also a former officer of Cromwell's army, had a large estate. Here Richard Morris married Sarah Poole, a lady of distinguished birth, and the couple soon came to New York while it was still New Amsterdam in possession of the Dutch.

The Morris brothers purchased a large estate on Manhattan Island, which had been granted by the Dutch in 1639 to Jonas Broneks, the first white settler in Westchester County, and there Captain and Mrs. Richard Morris established their home. They had one child, a son Lewis, who became heir to the estate and under whose ownership it became a Manor in 1697 named Morrisania.

There were several of these great manorial estates in New York at that period, which were granted under a statute of Charles II, and their owners formed a powerful aristocracy, although not with the extreme feudal power of similar estates in England. However, the owner was known as the "Lord of the Manor" and tradition tells of the size and elegance of the manor houses and the splendor in which their owners lived. The manor house was always large, having many large rooms each with wainscoted walls and high fireplaces. The houses were surrounded by beautiful lawns with ornamental trees and formal gardens with box hedges. The estates were always tenant farmed which meant many small buildings on the place for the tenantry.

Lewis Morris, the first Lord of Morrisania, became a lawyer and was appointed a Judge of the Superior Court of East Jersey. At the union of East and West Jersey, forming the State of New Jersey, he

continued to take an active part and was chosen its first Governor. He married Isabella Graham, daughter of Hon. James Graham, Attorney General of New York. They had a son, Lewis, generally known as Lewis Morris, Jr., who became Judge of the High Court of the Admiralty of New York, and second Lord of Morrisania.

Lewis Morris, Jr., was twice married. His first wife was Catherine Staats, daughter of Dr. Staats, who married an Indian Begum in the Dutch East Indies, and settled in New York where he became prominent as one of the heads of the Liberal party in the Dutch period. They had three sons, Lewis, Richard, and Staats. Mr. Morris' second wife was Sarah Gouverneur, a lady of Huguenot descent, and they had a son, Gouverneur.

The Morris family was noted for the superb physique of its men. They were men of natural ability, well educated, which made them leaders and the careers of most of them were devoted to their Country. These four sons of Judge Lewis Morris upheld the family tradition, all becoming very prominent in their chosen fields of activities. Lewis, the oldest, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, while Gouverneur, the youngest, wrote the final draft of the United States Constitution, making it a literary gem. Richard was an eminent jurist, and became Judge of the High Court of British Admiralty, and Staats became a Loyalist, a member of the British Army, and at the time of his death was Governor of Quebec.

Lewis Morris, the Signer, was the last Lord of Morrisania, for during the Revolutionary War the entire estate was laid waste. St. Ann's Church in South Bronx, New York City, stands on a part of the old estate and in the church-yard many members of the Morris family are buried.

Early Vermont history reveals many incidents in which both Richard and Gouverneur Morris took part. We find many letters from Gouverneur Morris to the early State officers showing his interest, and there were many important State issues signed in the presence of Judge Richard Morris when Vermont was claimed by New York. He once held Court in Westminster.

Judge Richard Morris married Sarah Ludlow and they lived at Mount Fordham, a part of Morrisania, and to them was born November 2, 1760, Lewis Richard Morris. He prepared for college but the efforts of the Country for Independence aroused his enthusiasm and he entered the Army where he served with much credit throughout the war, although only a lad in his teens at its outbreak.

He was on the staff of Gen. Schuyler, and after that officer was superseded by Gen. Gates, was on the staff of Gen. Clinton and also of Gen. Rensselaer. In 1777, by order of Gen. Schuyler, he led a force of troops from Schenectady through the wilderness to the relief of Ida Castle, which stood on the present site of the city of Utica, and was surrounded by a large force of Indian troops; and reaching there just in time to save the inmates from massacre. Lewis Morris saw Jennie McCrae only a few hours before she was massacred by the Indians, a tragedy that excited horror and indignation everywhere. From 1781 to 1783 he was secretary of foreign affairs under Chancellor Livingstone.*

II

Judge Richard Morris and Springfield, Vermont

John Nott, who built a log cabin on a meadow near the mouth of the Black River in 1752, is claimed to be the first white settler in Springfield, Vermont. The next year more settlements were made by men who were too poor to purchase land but claimed "Squatter Sovereignty" and depended upon the favor of the king, whose subjects they were, to recognize their claim for improving the land.

In 1759–1760, during the French and Indian War, General Jeffrey Amherst ordered a road cut through the wilderness to connect Fort No. 4, now Charlestown, New Hampshire, on the Connecticut River, with Fort Crown Point on Lake Champlain in New York. This road, known as the "Crown Point Road" extended diagonally across the present State of Vermont. From Fort No. 4 it was built to the banks of the Connecticut River where a ferry, named "Wentworth Ferry" for Benning Wentworth, Royal Governor of New Hampshire, crossed the river to Springfield, Vermont, where a blockhouse was erected. This blockhouse, made of hewn logs and surrounded by pickets, was built for a refuge in case of disaster and became a well known military center, as well as center for the early inhabitants of Springfield.

At the close of the French and Indian War, Governor Wentworth granted charters to many towns on the west side of the Connecticut River in the present State of Vermont, whose charter was dated August 20, 1761. However this charter was not granted to the fearless first

*Genealogical records from Hubbard, C. H., and Dartt, S., *History of the Town of Springfield, Vermont . . . 1752–1895*. Boston, 1895, pp. 394–396.

settlers or "Squatters" who already had done much to open the wilderness, but to a group of land speculators living in Northampton, Massachusetts, known as "Proprietors" only one of whom ever came to Springfield to live. Naturally this caused trouble for the Proprietors, instead of co-operating with the original settlers, ejected them from their claims. Another trouble arose when New York laid claim to the land granted by New Hampshire, so some of the Proprietors applied to the New York Governor for a Confirmation Charter from that State which was granted.

In the meantime, Judge Richard Morris, who had jurisdiction in this section, and Col. John Barrett, one of Springfield's early settlers, bought large tracts of this land from the Proprietors, and it was to them and twenty five others to whom the Confirmation Charter from New York was granted June 1, 1772. It is said that Judge Morris was attracted by the magnificent growth of pine indicating good soil although others more astute perhaps, affirmed that it was the controversy between the Squatters and the New Hampshire Grantees that suggested to him the idea of obtaining a New York Charter which would dispossess them all. It is not known that Judge Morris ever came to Springfield, but he had large possessions, for in 1778 a petition for a meeting of the Proprietors signed by him and Stephen Ward said — "We, the subscribers, owning more than one-sixteenth of the whole township of Springfield, request ——." He also owned lands in the nearby towns along the Connecticut River.

Among the lands in Springfield that came to Judge Morris under the Confirmation Charter was a tract at the lower falls in Black River that had been previously secured by earlier inhabitants under the saw-mill privileges granted by the original Proprietors. This privilege allowed any person desiring to build a saw-mill, twenty acres of land and a set of irons for the mill, on condition that he was approved by the Proprietors and kept the mill in good repair for fifteen years. Trouble arose over this property and, although Judge Morris tried to make a settlement with the owner, the discouraged man, who had spent much time and money in blasting his mill site from the rocks, abandoned the project. The mill was erected by Judge Morris and a small settlement grew around it, which for years was known as "Morris Mills." It was later purchased by William Gould who added other industries and is now known as "Gould's Mills."

Tradition says that Judge Richard Morris told his son, Lewis R. Morris, that he owned large tracts of land in Vermont, and, if he

wanted to go there and establish a home, the land was his. The son, not willing to start the adventure alone, persuaded his friend, Jennison Barnard, to accompany him. They came on horse back to look over the land and were so favorably impressed that they decided to locate, flipping up a copper to see who would have the hill land and who the meadow land. The hill land fell to Jennison Barnard and he settled in the section known as "Eureka" while Lewis Morris settled on the Connecticut River land, and it is recorded that both were well satisfied with the decision.

"That an ambitious young man," so says the Springfield *Town History* (1895), "of distinguished ability, attractive person, and winning manners, a member of one of the most influential and powerful families in the city and State of New York, with every reason to expect a successful public career in contact with the brightest minds of that great State, should turn his back on these tempting opportunities and advantages, and the polished society of the cultivated city, which he was so well calculated to enjoy and adorn, to cast his lot in the little colony in the wilderness of Vermont, struggling for existence between conflicting claims, and seemingly without strength to maintain her own right to existence, is a mystery not easily understood by the young Vermonters of today."

It is uncertain just when Lewis R. Morris settled in Springfield but at a Town meeting held December 19, 1785, he was chosen a member of the Meeting-house committee, and met with them both December 23 and January 4, 1786.

In 1788 Richard Morris gave his son power of attorney over his vast possessions in Vermont, and on December 6, 1791, deeded it all to him. Much of the land was leased to settlers and both father and son were accounted good landlords, strict in looking after their own interests but lenient when men were willing but unable to pay. Once Richard Morris included in a lease this clause — "I, Richard Morris, at the particular request of George Hannum, and for him only, and not for his heirs, assigns, executors, or administers, do agree to accept from him his rent in grain or cattle at the going price, and permit him to be over one year behind in his rent."

One of the valued possessions of the Vermont Historical Society is a chest that was presented by a Morris descendant. It originally came to America about 1777 and was used by a Hessian Regiment as a strong box for its valuables. It was captured at the Battle of Trenton and later became the possession of Richard Morris. He sent it to his son,

Lewis R. Morris, in Springfield, Vermont, "to secure your valuables from that dishonest and reckless population of the Green Mountain State who have held against the just and true claims of New York." That reason may have arisen from the fact that under the Vermont Act of October 27, 1784, some of Richard Morris' lands were seized to make reprisals.

III

The Morris Homestead

Lewis R. Morris was an aristocrat and doubtless patterned his new home in Springfield after the Manor-houses of his ancestors. His house was completed in 1795 after being seven years in building. It is standing today (1945) a noble example of early colonial architecture and a monument to its builder and Samuel M. Lewis its architect. It stands on a knoll well back from the highway, giving across the spacious lawn vistas of the Connecticut River with the New Hampshire hills beyond, while the rear of the house looks upon the wooded slopes and rugged ledges of Skitchewaug Mountain, a part of the estate.

The lumber used in the construction of the house was all cut and prepared on the place as well as the bricks which were hand made. The walls of the house are brick over which are clapboards with very ornate cornices. A spacious hall extends the width of the house with large rooms on each side, each with a large fireplace. The mantels, dadoes, and cornices are all ornamented by hand carving done with a penknife. The panels of the wainscotting are made of boards of such width that no joining is visible, and all the interior is finished with fine selected lumber. In one of these rooms is a secret compartment in the window casing used to secrete valuable papers. The hinges on the doors are all hand wrought and many of them very ornate. From the hall winds a beautiful staircase to the second floor where the hall and rooms correspond with those in the first floor, each with its fireplace. Over all is a large attic and flat roof, the first shingles of which were not changed for eighty years. The cellar is an immense room with brick walls, and has two large vaulted wine cellars. The original ell contained a large barn-like room with eight-foot fireplaces, and immense brick ovens and this room served not only as a kitchen but a sitting room for the servants with sleeping accommodations above. Tradition says that Mr. Morris brought colored slaves with him, when he first established his home, who had to be freed in the State of Vermont. The yard in front

of the house had many trees, which have now grown to magnificent proportions during the years, and was surrounded by a fence. A driveway went around the house with a lane on the north side that led to the main highway. The ell was removed many years ago to another part of the estate for a tenant house. With this exception and the porches that have been replaced with modern piazzas, the old house remains as it was when Mr. Morris occupied it.

In this house Mr. Morris lived in great grandeur. In an inventory of his personal property for a tax list of 1810, the first list recorded, it is found that he had eight oxen, fourteen cows, fourteen other cattle, four hourses, two colts, one house clock, one gold watch, and one pleasure carriage. The records show that there was only one other gold watch in town, eleven clocks, and four pleasure carriages.

Mr. Morris was a skilled horseman and a familiar figure on the streets of the nearby towns. It is related that once while riding on Main Street in Springfield a little below the present square, he picked up a lady's glove from the ground while riding at full speed and returned it to her with a courteous bow.

Many glimpses into the Morris family life in the old homestead have been preserved. Mr. Morris was a very handsome man, a perfect gentleman with an ease and grace of manner under all circumstances, that made him a great favorite. There are many stories about his fastidiousness in regard to his household life as well as his personal appearance. He always wore a queue, and for many years small clothes. A tailoress was employed who came to the house and only the finest of broadcloth was used for his suits and the most elegant satins for the vests, while each garment had to be finished to perfection. He prided himself on his dining room appointments and service, all meals being served with great dignity. He dressed with the greatest care for each meal and required the same from each member of the family. It is related that whenever the family physician was called professionally, he was expected to wear his best clothes and remain to the following meal at which a special topic, previously prepared, was the subject of conversation. A refusal to do so would have been considered very discourteous. When large parties were given the hall was used as a dining room.

In 1796, Lewis Morris married Mary Dwight in Northampton, Massachusetts. She was the daughter of Timothy Dwight, born at Fort Dummer, the first English settlement in Vermont, while his father, Lieut. Timothy Dwight, who built the Fort, was in command. She was also grand daughter of Jonathan Edwards, the great divine. This

marriage did not prove a success and the couple separated and each remarried. A daughter, Louisa, lived with her grand-mother Dwight until she was ten years old when she joined her father and his wife in Springfield.

Mr. Morris' second wife was Theodosia Olcutt, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Olcutt of Charlestown, New Hampshire, a lady of delicate health who died in 1800 leaving a son, Lewis Olcott Morris, a genial, popular man who inherited his mother's frail constitution and died at the age of twenty-one. Mrs. Morris was first buried in the old Crown Point "Burying Ground" on Skitchewaug Mountain but was later moved to a family lot in Forest Hill Cemetery in Charlestown.

For his third wife, Mr. Morris married Ellen Hunt, daughter of Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Hunt of Vernon, Vermont. To them were born five children — Richard, a lieutenant in the United States Navy, a courtly gentleman much admired by his old neighbors on whom he always called on his rare furloughs; Sarah Ludlow, who married Edward Ballard; Gouverneur, who inherited his father's fine looks and courteous manners, and became a lawyer and judge in Michigan; Jonathan Hunt, later called James, who married his brother Richard's widow and also settled in Michigan; and Robert who died at the age of twenty. A record in the Springfield Town Clerk's office reads — "This certifies Jonathan Hunt and Robert, children of Lewis R. and Ellen Morris, were baptised by me September 27, 1816, according to the rights of the Protestant Church in the United States of America. Asa Eaton, Rector of Christ Church, Boston, Massachusetts." Recorded November 27, 1817.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris attended church in Springfield, at least part of the time, doubtless the old First Church on the Common, and rode the seven miles on horse back, Mrs. Morris riding the pillion back of her husband. In the winter months, Mrs. Morris, like the other ladies, carried her foot stove which was filled at a nearby Tavern, for there was no heat in the church and the service was long. A grand-daughter related that on one snowy Sunday her grand-parents thought the storm too heavy for them to attend church, and later learned that a neighbor, living two miles north of them, did go, only to find the church closed as no one in town wanted to venture out in the storm. The same grand-daughter also related that at one time there was a special occasion in Springfield to be followed by a dance, so Mrs. Morris put her dress for the ball into a bag which was placed in front of her husband on the horse so it wouldn't be mussed, and went to the Tavern to change.

After Consul William Jarvis retired from official life as Consul to Lisbon under Presidents Jefferson and Madison, he established his home in Weathersfield Bow, a village on the Connecticut River in Weathersfield, the town north of Springfield, and there he brought his bride. Among the first callers to welcome the bride to her new home and to Vermont were Mr. and Mrs. Lewis R. Morris who lived four miles south.

At one time Mrs. Morris and the children went to Brattleboro to spend a few days. Doubtless Mr. Morris took them and was to go for them at the close of their visit. He started on the latter trip when something that he heard in Charlestown caused him to return home at once. In the meantime the house and farm help thought this a good time for merry making and thus take advantage of the absence of both the master and mistress. All work ceased and they were preparing for a royal feast, even drawing on the parlor larder where eggs, lump sugar, raisins, and other stores were kept, when the master of the house appeared at the kitchen door. Consternation seized them, but Mr. Morris entered without a frown and taking the proper utensils helped to prepare the feast, and then sat down at the table with them and served the meal, seeing that each shared the best. After the meal was over Mr. Morris in a tone of confident authority remarked words similar to these — "Now boys and girls, you have had a fine frolic and a good dinner. We have all had a good time but this won't happen again."

Mr. Morris was a frequent visitor to the public schools in which he was much interested and to which he sent his children until they were old enough to be sent away to prepare for college.

Gouverneur Morris at one time bought 220,000 acres of land in the northern part of Jefferson County, New York, of the "Antwerp Company" land speculators from Antwerp, Belgium. In December his nephew, Lewis R. Morris, purchased from his uncle 49,000 acres in the present town of Antwerp for $62,000. It is said that he bought 18,000 acres for one dollar an acre and later sold it for two dollars an acre. In 1807, leaving a son in Charlestown with relatives, Mr. Morris and his wife and daughter Sarah spent a year on this land in New York. A clearing was made in the village of Ox Bow, in the town of Antwerp, and a log shanty erected which would mean that they "roughed it" for a year. Here as at home they entertained much distinguished company, among them Uncle Gouverneur. The latter having suffered the loss of a leg could not ride horse back, and as there were no roads for carriages, the distinguished statesman and first United States minister

to the Court of France, was drawn through the woods on an ox sled. Gouverneur Morris so closely resembled George Washington in stature that he sat for Houden when he sculptured his statue of Washington.

IV

General Morris

Lewis Morris was a natural leader, and owning such vast properties he naturally became prominent not only in his home town, but in Bellows Falls which was on the Post road south, and in Charlestown, New Hampshire, which was connected with Springfield by a ferry. Mrs. Morris being a former resident of Charlestown had many social connections with that town. Mr. Morris was an incorporator of the Bellows Falls canal, his name appearing on both the Vermont charter of 1791 and the New Hampshire charter of 1792, in connection with Dr. William Page. However he sold his interests and the canal was finished under the direction of Dr. Page. In the northern part of Rockingham, the town in which Bellows Falls is one of the centers, near the Springfield line is a large brook flowing into the Connecticut River called "Commissary Brook" named for Mr. Morris because it flowed through his land and from the fact that he was a Commissary General in the army.

As early as 1793 a petition was presented to the Vermont Legislature by Lewis R. Morris and Col. John Barrett asking for the exclusive right of building a bridge across the Connecticut River near the residence of Col. Barrett, doubtless on or near the site of Wentworth Ferry. Evidently this bridge was never built for the first one across the river in this locality was built about a quarter of a mile below by a corporation, although Mr. Morris was one of the incorporators. The bridge, built in 1800, was named "Cheshire Bridge" for Cheshire County, the name of the county on the New Hampshire side at that time. Many bridges have replaced that one but the name has been retained always.

Naturally the influence of such a man began to spread and Mr. Morris became known in the State and Nation. In 1789 he became clerk of Windsor County Court serving until 1796 when he became judge of the same Court, a position which he held until 1801, and thus supervised the taking of the first census in the County. In 1790 and 1791 he served as clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives. This

was the session at which it was decided to apply to Congress to admit Vermont into the Union as a State. Nathaniel Chipman of Rutland and Lewis R. Morris of Springfield were chosen Commissioners. Their commission must have been well done for on February 9, 1791, the Senate received the following message from the President —

> Gentlemen of the Senate and the House of Representatives;
>
> I have received from the Governor of Vermont, authentic documents expressing the consent of the Legislature of New York and of the Territory of Vermont, that the said Territory shall be admitted to be a distinct member of our Union, and a memorial of Nathaniel Chipman and Lewis R. Morris, Commissioners from the said Territory, praying the consent of Congress to that admission, by the name and style of the State of Vermont, copies of which I now lay before Congress with whom the Constitution has vested the object of these proceedings.
>
> George Washington.

Vermont was formally admitted as a State March 4, 1791. Among the first State officers, George Washington appointed Nathaniel Chipman as Judge, and Lewis R. Morris as Marshal.

Mr. Morris was a member of the Vermont Constitutional Convention in 1793 and its Secretary, not only signing the Constitution with Governor Chittenden, but the minutes of the meeting are in his handwriting. In October of this year he was made Brigadier General in the State Militia, and two years later, October 19, 1795, was made Major General of the First Division, serving for twenty-two years.

In the sessions of the Vermont House of Representatives of 1795 and 1796, Gen. Morris was the Representative from Springfield, serving both times as Speaker of the House. While there he sent this letter to the Selectmen of Springfield —

> Gentlemen
>
> Enclosed I do myself the honor to transmit you the enclosed Proclamation for a Thanksgiving that the town of Springfield may have the earliest information of that event. I send two copies that they may be published in the town in such places as they may think proper.
>
> I am gentlemen
> with respect & esteem
> your most obed. servant
> L. R. Morris.

From May 15, 1797 to March 3, 1803, Gen. Morris served as one of the Vermont Representatives in the National Congress in its fifth, sixth, and seventh sessions. He was a member in 1800 when the

Electoral College failed to elect a president, being a tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, and the election was thrown into Congress. The House began balloting February eleventh and continued through thirty-five ballots. Vermont's vote was divided for Gen. Morris was a Federalist, and Matthew Lyon, the other Representative, was a Republican. On the thirty-sixth ballot, Gen. Morris withheld his vote thus giving the vote of Vermont to Thomas Jefferson, which was enough to elect him. Historians are inclined to give the credit of the election to Matthew Lyon, but Gen. Morris should have some credit for his courage in withholding his vote.

After returning from the National Congress, Gen. Morris again represented Springfield in the State Legislature, and continued in the same capacity for the next three sessions, making six times that he held that position. He served on many important committees, often as chairman. He was chairman of the final committee that represented the measure "establishing a permanent seat of the Legislature at Montpelier" which is the geographical center of the State.

V

Old Letters

Character is often expressed in personal letters, and several written by Gen. Morris to his eldest daughter, Louisa, when she was away from home, and he in various places on official business, have been preserved, and permission given to quote from them. They are all models both for neatness and penmanship.

Philadelphia, February 19, 1799 [Louisa was attending school in Deerfield]: "You may go to dancing school if you wish, pay great attention to your writing and spelling."

Washington, February 24, 1800: "— having received a letter from you dated Hadley, Feb'y, on which day of Feb'y, or whether even of the past or present century, I cannot certainly tell, unless I judge from the contents of the letter. I mention this that you may correct this negligence in future, a woman should be neat and correct in everything and the sooner you get yourself into the habit of doing everything well, the sooner you will excel."

April 2, 1800: "You have now made that proficiency in common learning which is amply sufficient to enable you to acquire more, — the necessity and importance of your becoming acquainted with history is

too evident to need inforcing. Let me therefore recommend to you Hume's History of England, pray read it with great attention. It is not important that you read a great deal but that you read with great attention, and understand what you read."

April 23, 1800: "Let me therefore pray you to improve yourself as much as you can while the time lasts for improvement."

April 30, 1800: "Conversation, pray give this branch of knowledge every attention and consideration in your power, — check everything that approaches to vanity."

December 21, 1800: "I derive much pleasure in knowing that you are happy, now is the time for you to enjoy yourself, and let me command you to be as merry and happy as you can. Sorrow and care are the companions of riper years, and do not associate with them sooner than you can help. You had better attend the dancing school; improve your mind and manners by every means in your power. As to your dress, let it be always neat. I am not particular as to colors. Your tastes and feelings are the best guides. Whatever may be necessary in dress you can procure and the sooner you begin to depend on your own judgment and taste the sooner your judgment and taste will have a proper direction. You will not love me less for believing me your best friend."

January 1803 [Louisa was visiting in New York]: "I am sure it is quite unnecessary to mention to you that your connections in New York will introduce you to as good if not the best society in that city, but on you must depend the estimation in which you may be held; remember, my dear girl, that while you treat every person about you with respect, that you must not neglect to respect yourself, for though you are yet young and can hardly be said to have a character formed, yet it is daily forming, and as mankind are too often prone to form an opinion before they understand the subject, so too of character, first impressions are not easily eradicated. I do firmly believe that half the misfortunes of character which happen to your sex originate in levity."

Louisa Morris was married at the Morris homestead in Springfield, on February 28, 1807 to John Stark Edwards. His home was in Warren, Ohio, where he had established his business in the little known Western Reserve. Thither their wedding journey took them, first by sleigh to New Haven, Connecticut, then by stage to Philadelphia, and doubtless on horse back much of the remaining distance. That they were a happy, handsome couple was noticed by an early settler living en-route who, seeing them when they stopped at a tavern, remarked that he had never seen such a handsome couple. In Warren a small

frame house was built for their home which is standing today (1945), the oldest house in the place, and has been made into a Museum by an Historical Society.

VI

1760–1825

Lewis Richard Morris died at his home October 29, 1825, aged sixty-five years and was buried in the family lot in Forest Hill Cemetery in Charlestown, New Hampshire. Born in New York, died in Vermont, and buried in New Hampshire; the three states in which he had lived and labored.

A neighbor wrote of him — "He was a very handsome man of commanding presence and courtly manners. He was certainly not without his faults, and what we call the frailties of his age and class, but his education, social standing, wealth, and intelligence made him a leader in town. He never forgot the difference betwixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee, but he was a kind neighbor in his way, especially to those in trouble."

On the one hundredth anniversary of his death, the General Lewis Morris Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in Springfield, placed a marker in front of the old homestead bearing this inscription —

GENERAL LEWIS R. MORRIS
1760–1825
HOMESTEAD
Built by him 1795
Soldier of the Revolution
Member of Congress 1797–1803
Commissioner for Vermont's Statehood 1791
Secretary of Constitutional Convention 1793
Member of Vermont Legislature six times
His action decided the Presidency in 1801.

VII

Ellen Hunt Morris

For forty years Mrs. Morris survived her husband, always living at the old homestead. She is described as a tall, thin lady with pleasing manners, kind to the poor and good to children. For many years she

lived alone in the front part of the house, while her farmer lived in the old kitchen, in which partitions had been erected making a sitting room, and bedroom, and still a good sized kitchen remained.

Her first farmer brought his bride to this home, and to them was born a little daughter to whom Mrs. Morris became much attached. When cooking she would make a little pie or cake for the little girl, and often let her ride with her down the lane to the gate when she started on her drives. One of the farmer's duties was to keep in readiness Mrs. Morris' horse harnessed into a two-wheeled chaise, often hitching it beside the house until she was ready to drive. She was remembered to have driven a bay horse, then a little French horse, with dark mane and tail, and later a calico horse. Her church and social life was in Charlestown and she was a very familiar figure driving through the streets of that town.

Upon the death of Mrs. Morris' daughter, Sarah Morris Ballard, two grand-daughters, Ellen and Sarah, came to live with her, and once again the old homestead sheltered young people. At the death of the grand-mother, they became owners of the homestead, which was later sold after sheltering the Morris family for over three quarters of a century.

A few clauses from the will of Mrs. Morris are not only unique and interesting but reflect her character:

> "I, Ellen Morris of Springfield, County of Windsor and State of Vermont, of sound mind and clear memory, but of feeble health, do make this my last will and testament."
>
> "First, — I commit my soul to the Almighty, trusting for salvation to the merits of the Saviour."
>
> "Second, — I direct my body to be suitably buried, and good plain tomb stones put to my grave, inscribed with my name, age, and date of death, only."
>
> "Fourth, — I give to my grandson, Lewis R. Morris, the large silver cup which belonged to his great-great-grandfather, hereby expressing my desire that he bequeath the same to the oldest male representative of the oldest branch of the family."

The will closed with this clause — "Placing full trust and confidence in my friend, Henry Closson, of Springfield, I hereby appoint and constitute my executor, and I enjoin upon my children and grandchildren, that they make no difficulty, nor have any contention in the settling of my estate, as I have endeavored to express plainly my wishes in regard thereto. I desire that the same may be quietly and peaceably adjusted."

Journals of Convention

3d July 1793

Tuesday, 9th July 1793.

The Convention met pursuant to Adjournment.

27th Section in the old Constitution be expunged

The Constitution passed in Bulk

Resolved that Stephen Pearl & Lewis R Morris

be a Com.tee to inspect the printing of the Constitution as agreed

to by this Convention — and that they have

500 Copies printed and kept in the Printers

possession of the

until they shall receive further orders from

the Legislature of this State

Convention dissolved —

Attest L R Morris Secy to the

Convention —

Title and concluding pages of the Journals of the Constitutional Convention of 1793, of which Lewis R. Morris was Secretary. The full journals have been printed in *Essays in the Early History of Vermont*, VHS *Collections*, volume 6, pp. 209–304.

Morris Homestead
in Springfield

Eureka Schoolhouse (1785)

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Romance of an Old School House

During the French and Indian War, Gen. Jeffrey Amherst demanded a road built through the wilderness as a shorter route between Fort No. 4, now Charlestown, N.H., on the Connecticut River, and Crown Point in New York. This road known as the "Crown Point Road," while connecting a Fort in New Hampshire and one in New York was entirely across the present State of Vermont, with its southern gateway in Springfield. Many soldiers who assisted in building the road through Springfield chose their home sites and, at the close of the war, returned to establish their homes. Thus the first center of Springfield was not on the Black River as to-day but on the Crown Point Road, in a section known as "Eureka."

As soon as their homes were built, these pioneers had both religious services and a school, both of which were at first held in the homes. The first building used as a schoolhouse was a barracks that had been built for supplies by the builders of the road, and of course was of logs.

No traditions of that barracks school have been preserved except for one master, who is remembered not for his teachings but for his severe whippings. He was a dyspeptic tyrant and whipped without regard to reason, his last words at the close of school being — "No tales out of school." The pupils obeyed so literally that for some time the parents never knew of his severity. One day a mother found a long purple welt on the back of her little son that had been made by a cane. It took her some time before she could draw out the whole story and then she was quick to act. The next day this mother prepared a very fine dinner to which she invited the school master and served the meal with plenty of "tongue sauce." Other mothers also asked him to dine and at every place the meal was served with the same sauce, until the suspicions of the teacher were aroused, and finally the use of the rod was forbidden in the school; the first up-rising in Springfield schools. At one time Master Clark conceived the idea that the flesh of a rattlesnake would be good for him in his dyspeptic state, so he asked one of the ladies to cook it for him. Upon being asked if she wasn't afraid it would kill him, her reply was — "No, Master Clark is so much meaner than a rattlesnake, I know it won't harm him." (Story told by granddaughter of the lady who cooked it.)

After the Revolutionary War, when the community was enlarged

by more settlers, a school house was built in 1785, which is standing today (1945), doubtless the oldest school house in Vermont.

Previous to this time, William Bettergneau, a half-breed Indian of French blood, a member of the Hudson Bay Company, wandered through this locality in search of game. He found so many beavers in this section that he remained to trap them, and built his cabin on Skitchewaug Mountain, near a falls in a brook that have since been called "The Falls of Bettergneau." He has been described as a giant of a man and straight as an arrow. Tradition says that the Indian Skitchewaug, for whom the mountain was named, also lived on the mountain, became a friend of Bettergneau and often they used to go hunting and fishing together.

Although William Bettergneau was between seventy and eighty years of age at the time the new school house was built, it was he who cut and prepared the lumber for the foundation. He selected only the finest spruce trees for this work and prepared the lumber with an adze. He is said to have taken a great interest in the construction of the school house, for having no "eddication" himself, he wanted to help in the "eddication" of others; however he is said to have signed the receipt for his work in a bold legible hand writing.

The school house is a small block-roofed structure, the sides being covered with blocked sheathing of wide pine boards and was originally painted yellow. The blocking of the weather boarding to represent stone work like the stone school houses of foreign lands is said to have been the work of the Indian.

Small as is the school house, so great was a desire for an education that it is said often eighty to one hundred and twenty-five students attended in a term and many of them walked miles each day. The life story of the teachers who taught in this school house and those who received much of their education there would make a volume of itself. Many of the teachers were college graduates, capable of teaching not only the elementary studies but the languages, sciences and higher mathematics, and many a student was prepared for college.

Tradition says that the name was given to the school house, and consequently to the whole community, by David Searle, a classical scholar who had wandered far in search of employment, and at sight of the little yellow school house exclaimed — "Eureka! Eureka!," meaning "I have found it." Formerly it was spelled "Erica," a name that has historic value to the town of Springfield, Vermont.

MARY W. ELLIS

NAME AND SUBJECT INDEX
for Vol. XII, n.s., 1944

Note: An asterisk (*) following a subject entry (for towns and cities) indicates that reference is made only to the place as being the *residence* of a person; i.e.: John Smith, of Moretown.

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